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Senate of Pennsylvania

November 5, 2010

Erie Times News
205 West 12th Street
Erie, PA 16534

Dear Editor:

Erika Staaf of PennEnvironment recently chastised Senate Republicans for breaking their commitment to enact a responsible severance tax on Marcellus Shale natural gas development.

The facts are we worked throughout the summer on a fair, competitive proposal which would have raised nearly \$100 million for investment in impacted local governments and environmental initiatives, while not discouraging the growth of this industry in Pennsylvania. Senate Republicans also worked on a comprehensive legislative package that would enhance environmental and safety protections as part of the drilling process as well. We even met with representatives of PennEnvironment in September to discuss our proposals with them.

Rather, House Democrats ended any effort for a compromise when they insisted on a model that was the highest tax in the nation – nearly 60% higher than even Governor Rendell proposed.

More than eight months ago, Senate Republicans announced that we would not be in session to take any legislative votes during the lame-duck, post-election session. It is simply not appropriate for legislators, many of whom are either retiring or were defeated on election day, to cast meaningful votes that contradict the will of the voters.

It is ironic that PennEnvironment now urges the Senate to break its commitment to good government for the sole purpose of enacting a tax.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary Jo White".

Mary Jo White
Senator, 21st District

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jane M. Earll".

Jane M. Earll
Senator, 49th District